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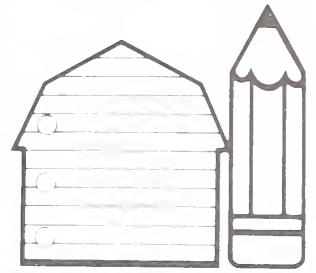
# Ag in the Classroom

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# Notes

United States  
Department of  
Agriculture



A bi-monthly newsletter for the Agriculture in the Classroom Program. Sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture to help students understand the important role of agriculture in the United States economy. For information, contact: Shirley Traxler, Director, Room 317-A, Administration Bldg., USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250-2200. 202/720-5727

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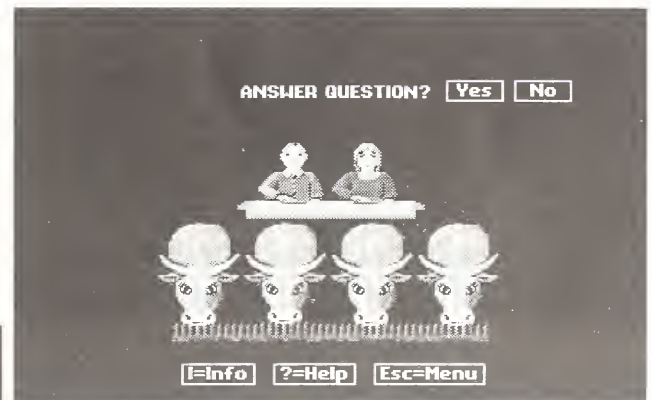
Vol. 8, No. 1

## New Teaching Kit Makes Teaching Science Sweeter

Is photosynthesis necessary for plant growth? Is human respiration similar to plant respiration? Why are there air pockets in bread?

Students can find the answers to these challenging questions in *Sugar Science: Photosynthesis to Food*, a new computer-based science teaching kit. *Sugar Science* was developed by the Sugar Association and reviewed by the National Science Teachers Association for use in upper elementary or middle school science classes. Lessons can be adapted for younger students or those in early high school.

The *Sugar Science* program takes a different approach to teaching the processes of photosynthesis, plant respiration, and the food chain. Students learn how plants use carbon dioxide, light, water, and minerals to produce food (glucose). They then learn how the food is



### SET UP EXPERIMENT

1 carbon dioxide in air?

☒ Yes  
☐ No

3 minerals?

☒ Yes  
☐ No



2 light?

☒ Yes  
☐ No

4 water?

☒ Yes  
☐ No

Z=Zoom

I=Info

?=Help

Esc=Menu

D=Done

In *Sugar Science*, students choose either to answer questions or set up experiments on their own.

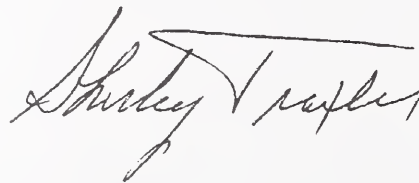
## Editor's Note

The 1991 Yearbook of Agriculture, titled "Agriculture and the Environment," is now available. It is printed with soy-based ink on recycled paper. The 344-page book is divided into six sections on Land, Water, Air, Technology, Food Safety, and What You Can Do.

Yearbook subjects include conservation tillage, sustainable agriculture, ground water, food safety, environmental legislation, interagency cooperation, recycling, testing drinking water, computer programs for application of fertilizers and pesticides, and local

volunteer efforts across the nation to maintain and enhance environmental quality.

You can get your copy of the Yearbook free from a Member of Congress or for \$12 from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D.C. 20402.



Shirley Traxler

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## New Teaching Kit Makes Teaching Science Sweeter

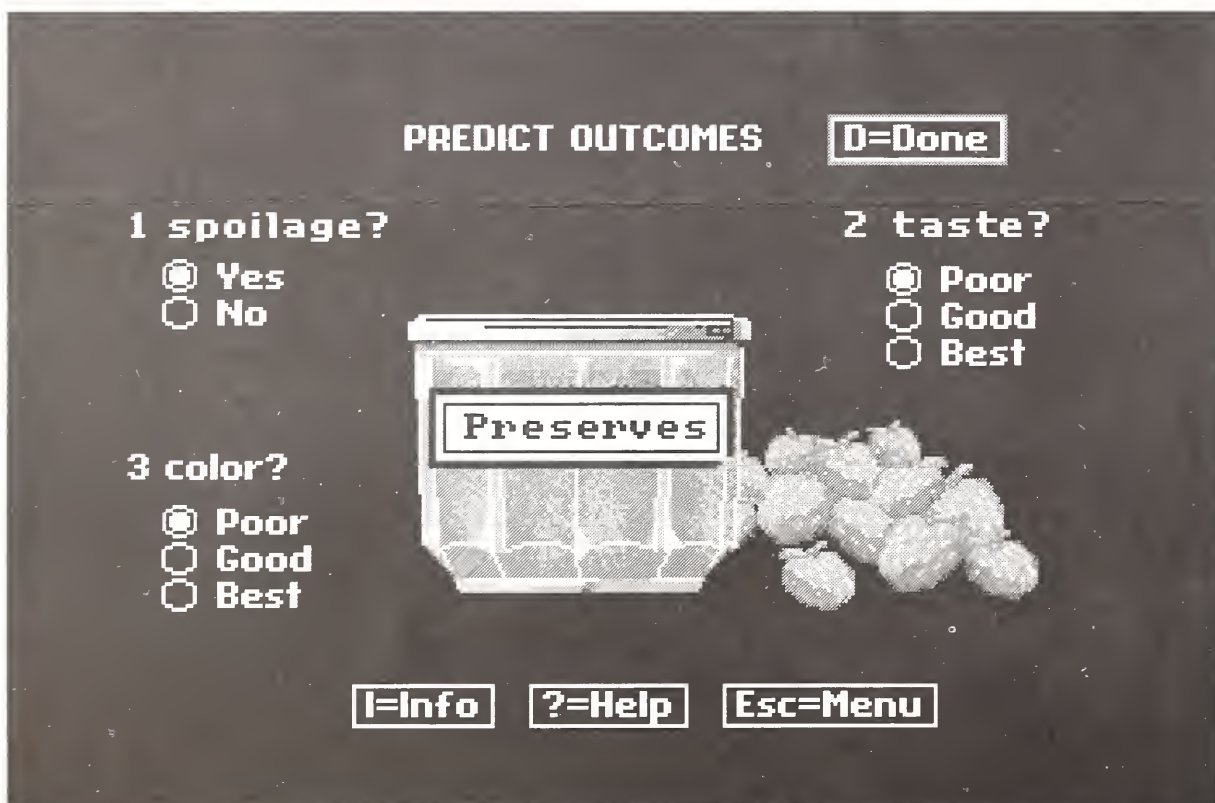
transferred to insects, animals, and humans.

The kit is divided into six units: photosynthesis, food chain, respiration, making bread, making preserves, and making ice cream. Each lesson in the program has been designed to be used alone or in conjunction with others in the kit. Each lesson includes an in-class experiment plan with an experiment overview and objectives. Process skills are emphasized. Each experiment comes with reproducible handouts so students can record their observations and research specific subjects. The kit also provides suggestions for further studies and projects. Many of these suggestions allow teachers to integrate science teaching into geography, social studies, and language arts

classes.

*Sugar Science* also includes a computerized learning program that allows students to act as scientists, designing and carrying out their own experiments. In each of six computer-based experiments, students choose their own variables and predict outcomes. They can even print out all the experiment results for later reference. Teachers receive matrices on which the computer experiments are based.

*Sugar Science* is available for \$39.95 from the Sugar Association, 1101 15th St. NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20005. Both the computer disk and the teacher's guide are reproducible in their entirety.



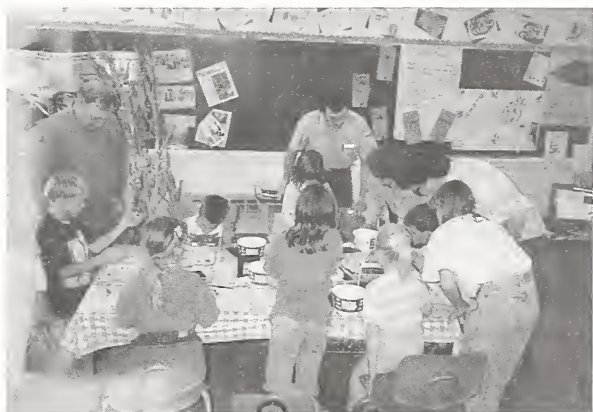


# Spotlight

## Students Learn To Give a "Hoot" About Owls

Most children understand that owls are a symbol of wisdom. But this year, students in a South Dakota country school have also learned that owls are helpful to people in agriculture. With their teacher, Cleo Thelen, the students have spent several months learning about owls, their habits, and the important role they play as predators of small rodents who eat farmers' grain.

The Raber School, located 25 miles east of Pierre, South Dakota, enrolls eight students from kindergarten through seventh grade. The school's location provides an ideal setting for an emphasis on nature. The students take turns contributing a bale of hay and sacks of grain to feed wild animals. "One day," reported seventh grader Valerie Fanger, "we saw more than 50 animals."



*Cleo Thelen and her students examine owl pellets to learn how owls help farmers control rodents.*

Fanger confessed that she was at first a little reluctant to examine the owl pellets. "I thought it would be gross," she said, "but it turned out to be fascinating."

First, students examined the owl pellets, which contained bone and other unused parts of the rodents, birds, and other small animals that owls eat. Fifth grader Boe Brown, for example, found two skulls in his pellet.

Then students used a bone chart to match the bones they found to the anatomy of the animals the owl had probably eaten. Finally, students were invited to draw conclusions about what they found. "We decided the owls were probably captive," Brown recalled, "because they had eaten several animals in such a short time."

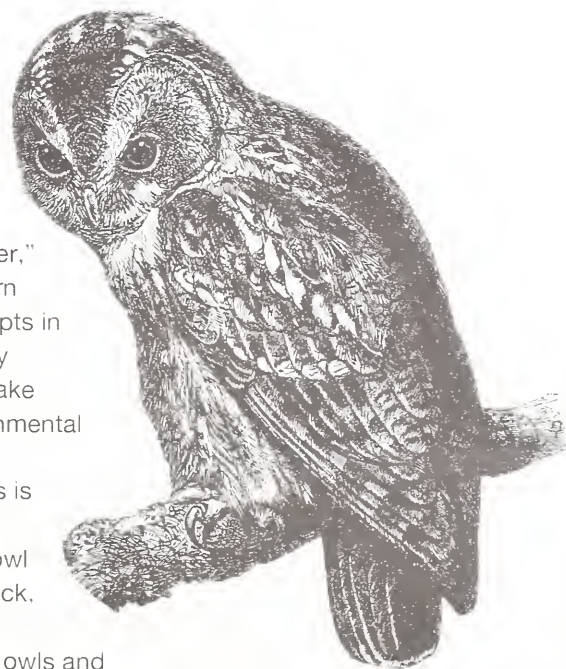
Thelen enjoyed the project because it allowed

her to integrate many disciplines. "Studying owls tied environmental issues, science, wildlife, and agriculture all together," she pointed out. As students learn about basic environmental concepts in the classroom, they will eventually develop the skills they need to make sound decisions on future environmental concerns.

"A good way to reach students is to have resource people come to class," Thelen believes. For the owl project, she invited Dan McCormick, a forester from the South Dakota Division of Forestry, to talk about owls and their relationship to trees. McCormick explained that everything in nature tends to strike a balance, and that humans are part of nature. "We humans, as resource managers, can manage forests for wildlife habitat, but we must also manage this renewable resource to supply us with our everyday needs," he told the students.

As a result of their study of owls, Thelen's students have become wise themselves. Boe Brown said, "I live on a farm, and I learned owls are very helpful to the farmer." Fifth grader Charlie Hyde said she learned about a possible career as a result of her explorations. "I might become a biologist," she concluded.

Thelen and her students are interested in corresponding with an urban class that shares their interest in environmentalism. Teachers who are interested in setting up such a pen pal exchange should write to Thelen at the Raber Rural School, c/o McKinley School, 302 East Dakota, Pierre, SD 57501.




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*"A good way to reach students is to have resource people come to class," Thelen believes.*

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## Vermont Project Finds Out What Students Know About Agriculture

Many educators have turned their emphasis toward measuring educational outcomes—what students actually know. A recent research project conducted by the Agricultural Experiment Station at the University of Vermont found that the state's fourth graders have learned some important things about agriculture ... but that there is still plenty of room for improvement.

Gerald Fuller, a faculty member at the university and one of the state contacts for AITC in Vermont, administered a test of agricultural literacy to a scientifically selected group of fourth graders throughout the state. The survey found that by fourth grade, most students have some minimal awareness of agriculture. For example, over 55 percent of the students knew that agriculture is the business that provides our food, clothing, and shelter. Many fewer students, however, understood that agriculture is historically significant (31.4 percent) or that agriculture is influenced by government (34.1 percent).

The project also included interviews with elementary school teachers and high school social studies and science teachers to determine what they are teaching about agriculture in their classrooms. "We also asked these teachers to identify other teachers they believed were doing an

excellent job of integrating agriculture into their instructional program so we could interview them," Fuller says.

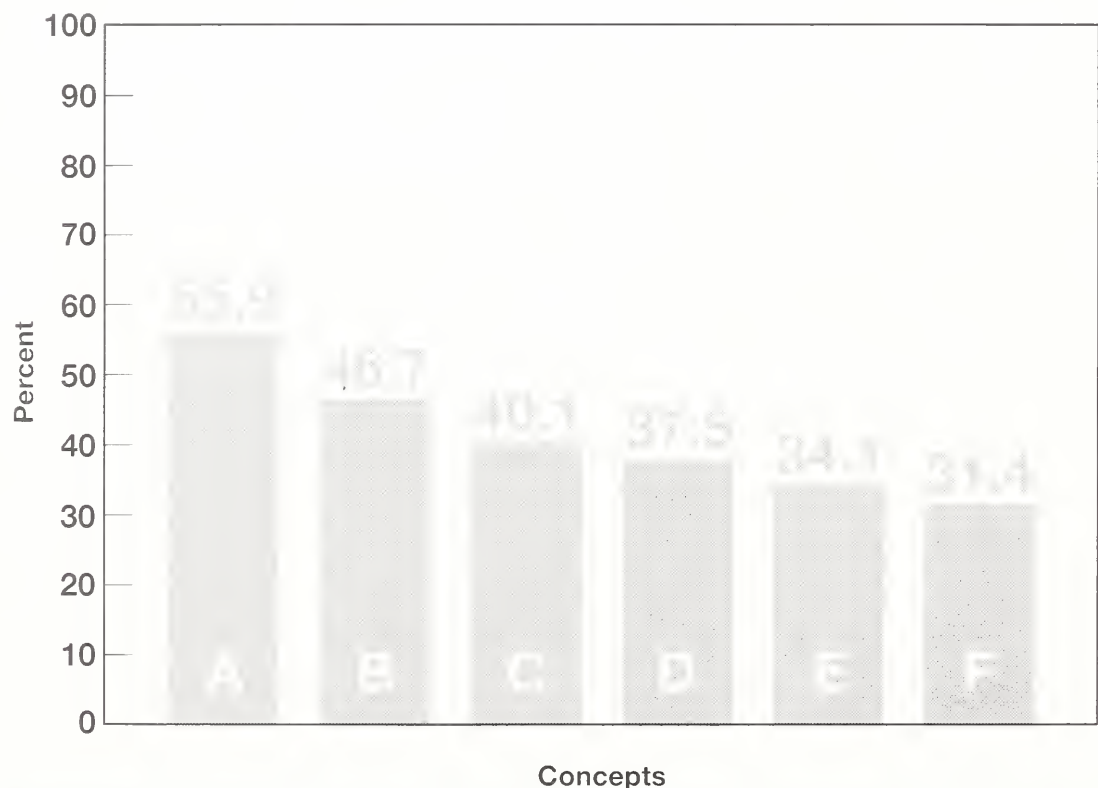
As a result of those surveys, and the follow-up interviews conducted with the exemplary teachers, the Agricultural Experiment Station has compiled a resource booklet, "Teaching About Agriculture." The first section identifies a network of teachers who are willing to share their successes with others. Whether they are planning an elementary school project on early American life or a high school tissue culture experiment, teachers can contact outstanding peers for help in designing and implementing their own classroom agricultural activities.

A second section of the book details organizations that have instructional resources to share with teachers. "Collaborations like these enable teachers to enrich the classroom experiences for their students," Fuller believes.

To address the needs identified in the survey, Vermont's AITC program hopes to sponsor a teacher workshop this summer in cooperation with Shelburne Farms, a nonprofit educational organization dedicated to teaching about and demonstrating the stewardship of natural and agricultural resources.

## 4th Grade Students Scores

Knowledge of Agricultural Concepts



### Concepts

**A.** Agriculture is the business that provides our food, clothing, and shelter.

**B.** Agriculture is interdependent with the well being of society in Vermont, the United States, and the world.

**C.** Agriculture is interdependent with the environment and natural resources.

**D.** Agriculture is a vital, dynamic system shaped by research and development.

**E.** Agriculture is influenced by government.

**F.** Agriculture is historically significant.



## New Kit IS The Apple Of The Teacher's Eye

Giving an apple to the teacher is a time-honored tradition. Now a new kit, "All About Apples," helps teachers integrate the study of this important fruit into their elementary school curriculum.

"All About Apples" is a cooperative effort of the New York and New England Apple Institute and Agriculture in the Classroom. Teachers involved in AITC activities in the New England States played an integral role in developing the kit. Rick Chandler, field coordinator for the Apple Institute, believes their involvement made the kit much more useful for teachers.

"We wanted to make the kit teacher-friendly," says Wayne Hipsley, state contact for AITC in Massachusetts and one of the creators of the kit. "That meant a poster and simple, easy-to duplicate learning activities that give a wide range of adaptations for a variety of grades. The teacher does not have to spend hours in preparation to use any of the activities."

"It makes a big difference to have a teacher say, 'If you produce information in this format, I'll use it,'" Chandler observes. "We were grateful to have the close involvement of some very talented teachers from the very beginning."

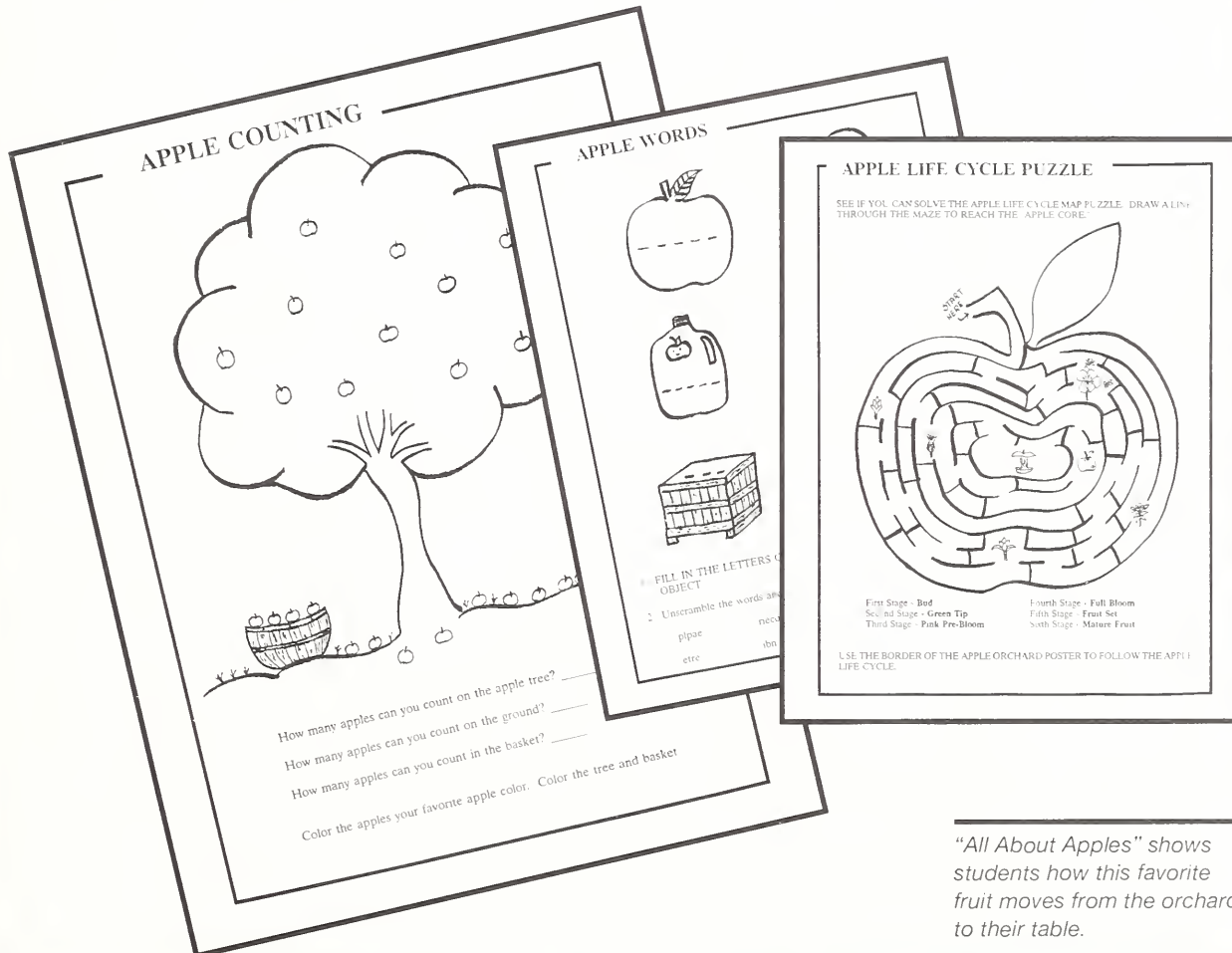
The kit is designed for grades K-6, but is particularly useful for grades K-2. "We targeted

that age group because they constitute the majority of classes that visit apple orchards," Chandler says. The kit includes a full-color poster that depicts the entire cycle of apple production, from planting and pruning through consumption at home.

"The apple growers wanted to give students an accurate picture of our industry," Chandler says. "The poster shows students how apple producers use technology, the importance of various racial and ethnic groups in apple production, and the important role that many women play in the industry."

Hipsley has introduced the kit in several teacher workshops throughout Massachusetts. "Now teachers arrive at the workshops asking for the apple materials," he says. "This kit is being promoted by positive word of mouth."

Kits are \$7 for one to five copies, with cost reductions for larger orders. The Apple Institute will donate \$.50 from the sales price of each kit to the New England/New York Ag in the Classroom Consortium. Contact your local AITC program or write to the New York and New England Apple Institute, P.O. Box 768, Westfield, MA 01086-0768.



"All About Apples" shows students how this favorite fruit moves from the orchard to their table.

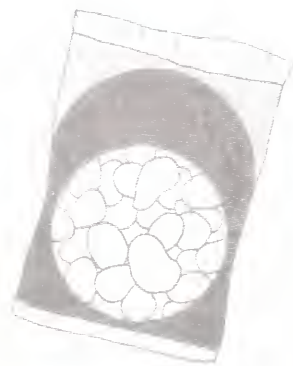


## In New York, Great Pumpkins Make More Than Pies



"Pumpkin at morning, pumpkin at noon. If it were not for the pumpkin we should soon be undone," wrote one early American settler. Today, New York first graders are learning about the pumpkin's important contributions to American history as part of new curriculum materials developed by the New York Ag in the Classroom program.

Betty Wolanyk, state contact for AITC in New York, developed the materials. The focus on pumpkins grew out of a desire to make agricultural concepts understandable to even the youngest children. "Pumpkins are a subject children at that age can respond to well," she says. Most children, for example, have heard the story of Cinderella and the pumpkin that transformed into a coach. And, of course, children have carved their pumpkins into jack-o'-lanterns for Halloween.



Although pumpkins provide a way to begin the study of agriculture with a familiar subject, they also offer a number of possibilities for student learning. "Teachers can do a lot of activities that are educationally significant. You can teach the life cycle, you can teach counting, or you can use it for art, just to name a few," Wolanyk notes.

In addition to learning about pumpkins, first graders also learn about tomatoes and potatoes, other familiar crops. Activities can be integrated into language arts, social studies, mathematics, and science lessons. "Because New York has a structured curriculum at the state level, we make sure our activities help teachers meet these objectives," Wolanyk says. "We know our materials will be useful to teachers, because the parameters have already been defined."

One of the biggest challenges was to develop teaching materials for students who cannot read. "We chose a dot matrix format that allows prereaders to trace important words," Wolanyk says.

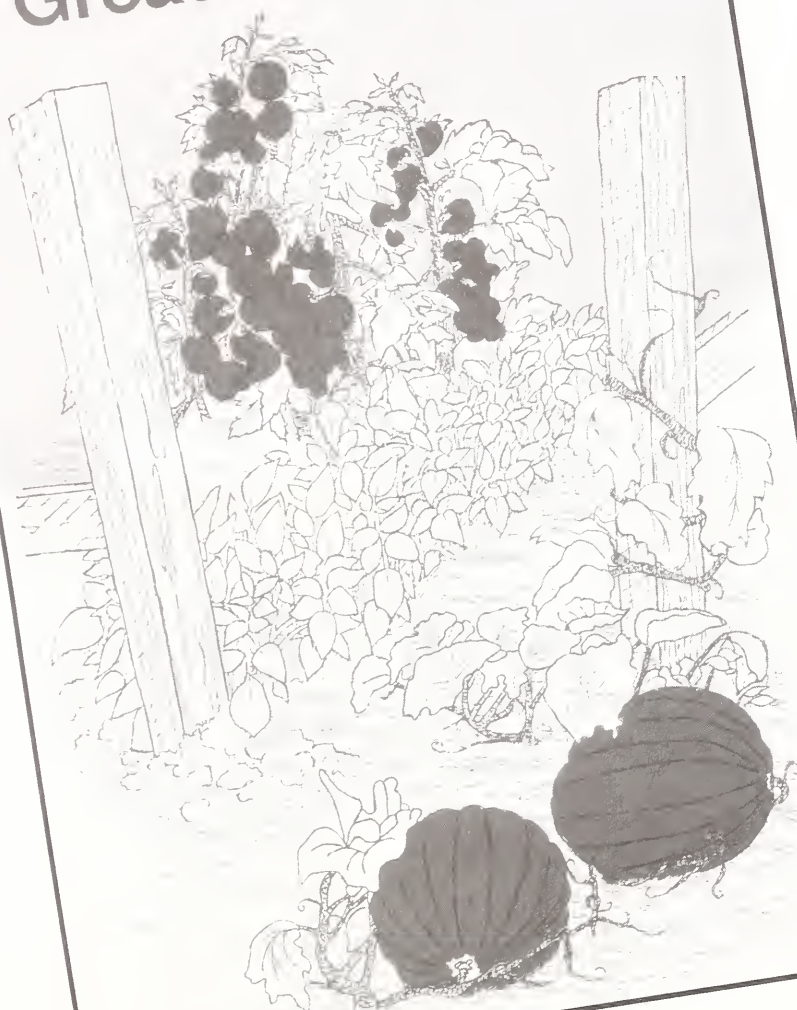
New York's AITC program is now developing agricultural materials for kindergarten. They will complete a set of materials for grades K-6. "We have tried to see that there is a natural progression from one grade to the next," Wolanyk says. Also in the works are materials for a high school economics course.

New York's AITC program recently received the Conservation Education Award from the Empire State Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. The award was presented to NYAITC for its role in developing a better understanding of the food and fiber system among youth and teachers, thereby creating an educated public better able to make environmental decisions.

"We were surprised and delighted to be recognized by a group with a similar mission," Wolanyk comments. "One of the things we strive for is not to reinvent the wheel, but to make use of the best materials from across the country." The AITC program has incorporated two conservation booklets produced by the society into its curriculum materials.

A classroom set of the first grade materials, including a teacher notebook and a classroom supply of student booklets, is \$50 plus shipping and handling. For a catalog of New York's AITC materials, including the new first grade curriculum, contact New York Ag in the Classroom, 111 Kennedy Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853-5901.

### Great Pumpkins





## From Algeria To Zimbabwe, New Factbook Covers Foreign Agriculture

In an era when "Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?" is one of the nation's fastest selling computer games, it's clear that geography is making a comeback. Now a new USDA guidebook can help teachers enrich geography instruction by providing a wealth of information on agriculture abroad.

*Foreign Agriculture 1990-91* is a colorful, fact-filled guidebook that features nearly 200 pages of agricultural information. It includes concise two-page profiles on 72 countries, which provide key information and data on the country's agricultural production, policies, and trade. The individual country profiles were prepared by Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) agricultural counselors, attaches, and specialists serving at embassies and trade offices around the world.

An expanded "Atlas of World Agriculture" follows the country-by-country profiles. This 40-page section includes full-color maps and charts that show production areas, harvest periods, and the leading producing and trading nations for major commodities.

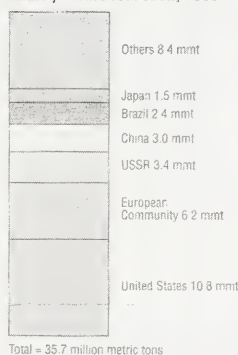
The easy-to-read reference guide has been expanded and updated from the first edition published in 1989. Produced by FAS, it is designed to help U.S. farm organizations, agricultural exporters, and others in exploring world trade opportunities and competing in the global marketplace.

*Foreign Agriculture 1990-91* is available for \$15 for single copies. Bulk orders of 10 or more are \$11 per copy. Contact the Information Division, FAS, Room 4638-S, USDA, Washington, DC 20250-1000. To order, specify the book title and send a check or money order payable to FAS.

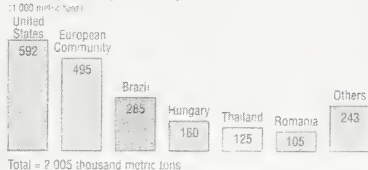
Country profiles and over 40 pages of maps and charts communicate information about foreign agriculture in a new FAS handbook.

### Poultry and Dairy Production and Trade

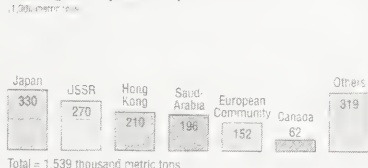
#### Leading Nations in Commercial Poultry Meat Production, 1990



#### Leading Poultry Meat Exporters, 1990



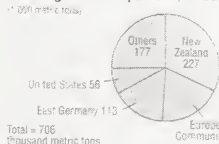
#### Leading Poultry Meat Importers, 1990



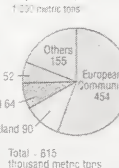
#### Leading Nations in Cow Milk Production, 1990



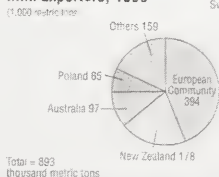
#### Leading Butter Exporters, 1990



#### Leading Cheese Exporters, 1990



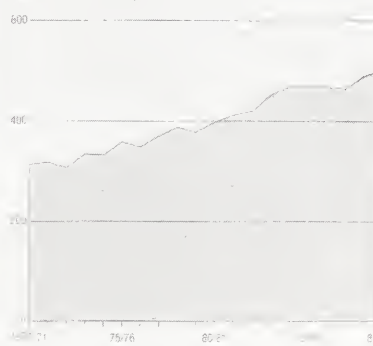
#### Leading Nontat Dry Milk Exporters, 1990



All data are preliminary. Poultry data are for total poultry meat in ready-to-cook equivalents. Trade totals exclude intra-EC trade. No adjustment is made for losses in time reporting discrepancies, and other factors that result in differences between world export and import totals. East Germany refers to former German Democratic Republic. Source: Dairy, Livestock and Poultry Division, Foreign Agricultural Service, USDA.

### Rice Production and Trade

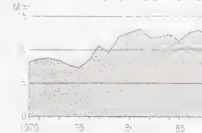
#### World Production Since 1970



#### Top Producing Nations, 1989/90

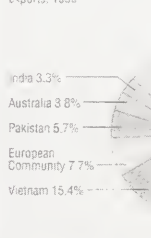
Nation	Production (million metric tons)	Share of total world (%)
China	135.0	35.4
India	100.0	25.0
Thailand	44.7	11.2
Burma	27.0	6.8
Others	20.8	5.2
<b>World's total</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>100.0</b>

#### World Trade Since 1970



#### Leading Exporters

Share of total world exports, 1990



#### Leading Importers

Share of total world imports, 1990



Production data are for rough rice and are reported on a marketing year basis. All data are preliminary. Trade data are for milled rice (extra 10% trade included) and are reported on a marketing year basis. Source: World Grain Situation and Outlook, January 1991, Foreign Agricultural Service, USDA.

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